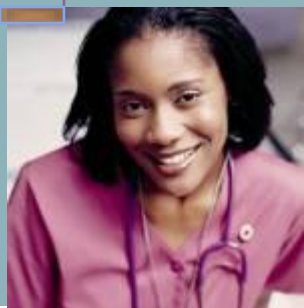




**Kentucky Adult Learner Initiative
Working Group on Credit for Prior Learning
August 26, 2008**



Judith Wertheim, Ed.D.
Vice President for Higher Education Services
CAEL



CAEL

The Council for Adult & Experiential Learning



CAEL's Mission

CAEL works to expand lifelong learning opportunities for adults.

CAEL pioneers learning strategies for adult learners in partnership with community colleges and universities, employers, labor organizations and government.

Adult Learning in Focus

National and State-by-State Data



2008

CAEL in partnership with NCHEMS



Adult Learning in Focus

- At current levels of performance, nine states are ‘on track’ to meet the competitive benchmark of 55% of adults with college degrees
- 9 more states could meet the benchmark if they improved performance to match the best-performing states.

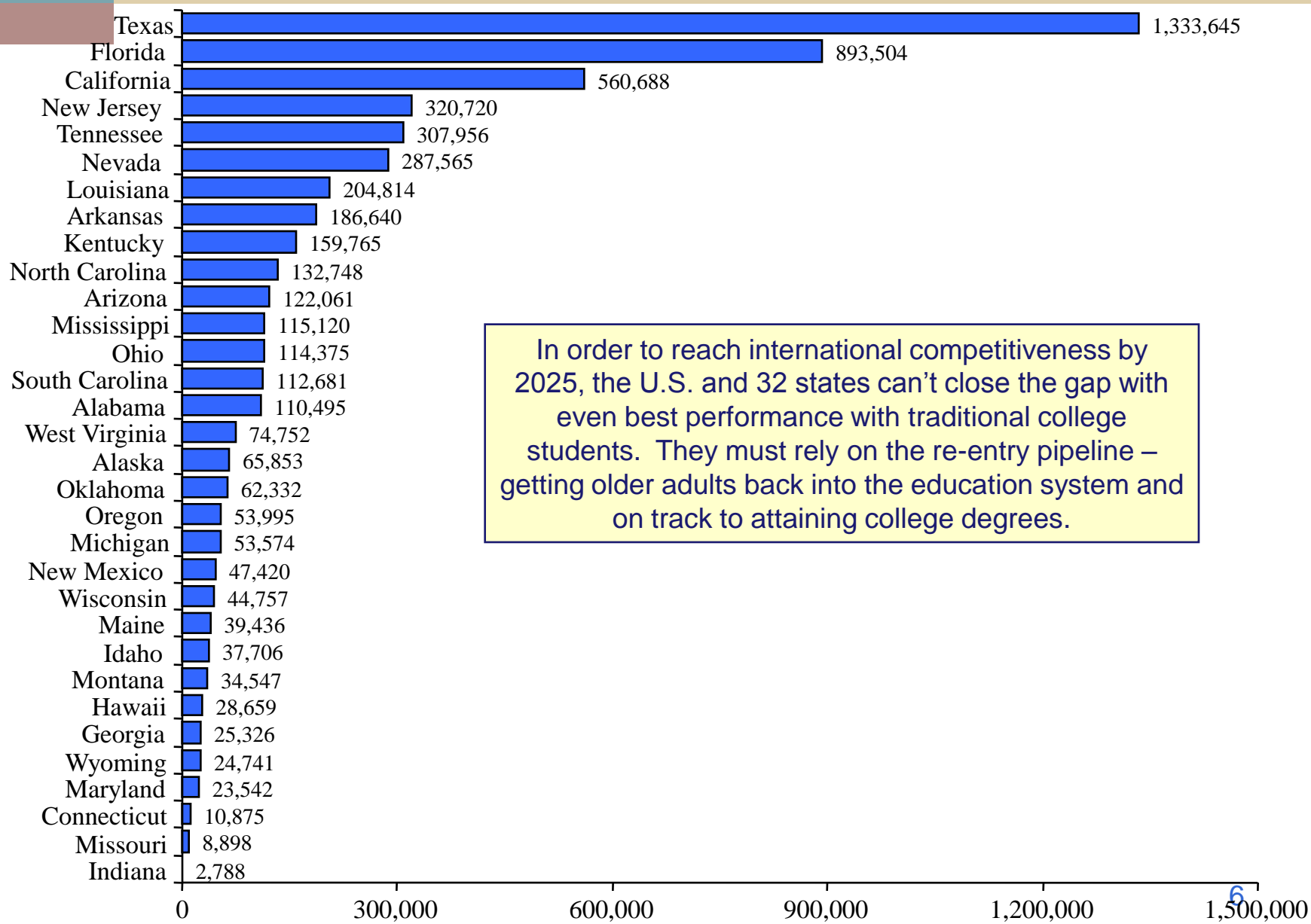


Adult Learning in Focus

- 32 states cannot catch up to the educational attainment levels of the best performing countries internationally by relying solely on strategies related to traditional-age students—even if students in those states graduate from high school at the rate of the best performing state, even if high school students enter college at the rate of the best performing state, even if these students graduate from college at the level of the best performing state, and even if educated immigrants continue to enter the U.S. at the levels of the recent past.



Even Best Performance with Traditional College-Aged Students at Each Stage of the Educational Pipeline Will Leave Gaps in More than 30 States





The Adult Learner

Characteristics of the Adult Learner

- Delayed enrollment in postsecondary education beyond the first year after high school graduation
- Part-time attendance
- Financial independence from parents
- Full-time work
- Having dependents (other than a spouse)
- Being a single parent
- No high school diploma

From *Adult Learners in Higher Education: Barriers to Success and Strategies to Improve Results*. U.S. Department of Labor. March 2007



Adult Learner Barriers

■ Institutional

- Policies and practices that impede and discourage adult learners

■ Situational

- Adult learner's life situation or circumstances

■ Dispositional

- Adult learner's personal concerns, beliefs, or attitudes



Another Way to Look at Barriers

Access

Affordability

Aspiration

From Adult Learning in Focus: National and State-by-State Data



Serving Adult Learners

Main Factors Influencing Adult's Decision to Enroll in Higher Education

- Convenient time and place for classes
- Flexible pacing for completing program
- Ability to transfer credits
- Reputation of institution
- Requirement for current or future job



Serving Adult Learners

Factors Influencing Decision to Enroll (cont'd.)

- **Credit for learning gained from life/work experiences**
- Availability of online courses
- Availability of financial assistance
- Tuition assistance from employer
- Availability of child care



What Is Prior Learning Assessment?

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is:

The evaluation for college credit of the knowledge and skills one gains from life experiences (or from non-college instructional programs) including employment, travel, hobbies, civic activities and volunteer service.



Four Approaches to PLA

All Ensure Academic Quality

- Nationally standardized exams in specified disciplines
- ‘Challenge’ exams for local courses
- Evaluated non-college programs
- Individualized assessments



Adult Learning Focused Institutions

CAEL's Principles of Effectiveness for Serving Adult Learners

1. Outreach
2. Life & Career Planning
3. Financing
4. **Assessment of Learning Outcomes**
5. Teaching-Learning Process
6. Student Support Systems
7. Technology
8. Strategic Partnerships



Quality Assurance Principles

- #1 Credit or its equivalent should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #2 Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #3 Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #4 The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #5 Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #6 If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #7 Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available for all parties involved in the assessment process.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #8 Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #9 All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continued professional development for the functions they perform.



Quality Assurance Principles

- #10 Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the state of the assessment arts.